

Isthmian rivals excite big crowd at High Wycombe

Sports Mail Special Report

THE Amateur Cup first-round clash between old Isthmian League rivals, Wycombe Wanderers and Wimbledon, attracted a big crowd to Loakes Park, High Wycombe, today and produced a tense and exciting struggle and some excellent football in spite of the heavy, slippery ground. Wycombe held the visitors to a draw until five minutes from the end.

Wycombe Wanderers: Brown, Beck, Atkins, Thomas, Fisher, D. Worley, Rockell, L. Worley, Holmes, Bates, Tomlin.

Wimbledon: Kelly, Martin, Rudge, Ardrey, Law, Murphy, Kenchington, B. Martin, Reynolds, Hamm, Williams. Referee: B. Hanton (Watford).

Brown ran out of his goal to make a plucky save in an early Wimbledon attack by Brian Martin, and it was soon evident that the burly visitors were going to provide the Wanderers with very tough opposition.

But although the Dons looked rather more dangerous in approach play, it was Wycombe who produced the first thrill, when Rockell put in a shot which went only inches wide.

Territorially, there was little to choose between the teams, and both goals in turn came under strong pressure, with the accent on hearty kicking rather than skill in constructive football.

Wycombe took the lead after 23 minutes when Kelly only partially saved a centre by Rockell.

The ball went out to HOLMES, who coolly hooked it back into the goal from a difficult angle.

Wycombe almost scored again in a series of hot attacks which followed, and Wimbledon had to pack their goal to keep them at bay.

First Tomlin and then Bates put in strong shots which Kelly cleared well.

But ten minutes before half-time, Wimbledon broke away and REYNOLDS flashed in an equaliser from a pass by Kenchington.

Half-time: Wycombe 1, Wimbledon 1.

With Wycombe playing with great spirit, early in the second half, Holmes brought Kelly to his knees with a powerful drive.

Then Beck ran the length of the field before sending in a great shot which Kelly again saved in fine style.

Holmes was helped off the field with an injured leg after 12 minutes but he soon resumed and a few minutes later he almost scored from a centre by Rockell.

Wimbledon claimed as much of the game as Wycombe in swift end-to-end play and once Brian Martin almost found the mark and a shot by Murphy sped inches wide.

MARKSMANSHIP ERRATIC

Staying the pace rather better in the last 20 minutes, Wimbledon often had the home defence hard pressed, but marksmanship was erratic and most of their shots soared over the bar. Wycombe deserved better luck with a smart header by Holmes, which curled round the wrong side of the upright.

Atkins almost found the mark with a free kick after Bates had been fouled just outside the penalty area.

WILLIAMS scored the winner for Wimbledon five minutes before the end.

RESULT:

WYCOMBE WANDERERS 1
WIMBLEDON 2

WYCOMBE FAIL TO HOLD LEAD

Wycombe W. 1 Wimbledon 2

INTENSIVE training to reduce weight paid dividends for tubby Peter Kenchington, Wimbledon's 13-st. winger, in the Dons' tough F.A. Amateur Cup first round test with Isthmian League rivals Wycombe Wanderers.

Switching from right to left wing in the first half, and back to the right in the second, he provided the passes which produced Wimbledon's first-half equaliser and their dramatic winner five minutes before the end, from 25-year-old left winger Norman Williams.

The match produced a great tussle between the opposing half-back lines, with Wycombe on top in the first half and Wimbledon gradually gaining ascendancy in the second.

Wycombe's hopes soared in the first half when, with wingers Rockell and Tomlin in lively form, their new centre forward, 19-year-old Tommy Holmes, put them ahead in the 23rd minute.

But the burly Wimbledon forwards always looked dangerous, and 13 minutes later the wily Kenchington supplied the pass from which Eddie Reynolds equalised.

There was little to choose between the sides in the second half, but the Wanderers' tactical blunder of playing to the centre rather than using the wings lost them their earlier advantage.

Wimbledon distributed the ball with greater effect in the cloying mud, but haphazard marksmanship baulked them until Williams's brilliant wing shot settled the match in a thrill-packed climax.